SPEECH

OF

HON. LEWIS W. ROSS, OF ILL.,

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JUNE 15, 1864.

The House having under consideration the joint resolution proposing amendments to the Constitution of the United States—

Mr. ROSS said:

Mr. SPEAKER: Occupying the position of a new member, without congressional experience, I have refrained from participating in the discussion of public affairs, but in view of the extraordinary assumptions indulged in by leading members of the party in power in arrogating to themselves to be the exclusive Union party, and hurling their anathemas of disloyalty against the Democratic party, I deem it due to my constituency and myself to probe their pretended Unionism, to answer and repel the grave calumny. Perhaps the radical members from Maryland and Ohio [Messrs. DAVIS and SCHENCK] have been the most arrogant in their assumptions and vituperative in their aspersions, while smaller craft have followed in their wake.

As evidence to sustain the slanderous imputation reference is made to certain resolutions offered in the Legislatures of Illinois and other States, and votes cast for Democratic nominees for Governor. Now, sir, the resolutions of said States, and the views of said candidates for Governor, may be submitted to the severest test of scrutiny, and the most unscrupulous mendacity cannot show a word or sentiment which does not breathe the purest patriotism and exhibit the most exalted devotion to the best interests of the country. I profess to have some knowledge of this party, having for thirty years been an humble member within the pale of its organization, aiding and rejoicing in its triumphs and sorrowing over its defeats. A party has never existed more national in its principles, conservative in its action, or patriotic in its impulses than the old Democratic guard. Sir, it has a clear record and an untarnished history, which will live in the affections and memories of the people as long as personal liberty and free constitutional government shall endure.

Permit me to call attention to a few significant historical facts: the Democratic party made the Government; they laid broad and deep its solid foundations and built a magnificent superstructure. From its organization, with few and short exceptions, they have held and governed it. For over sixty years it exercised its functions. Under its auspices and wise legislation we increased from three or four millions to over thirty millions of population, from thirteen to thirty-four States: under the ægis of our flag our commerce floated upon every sea, honored and respected throughout the world, without large armies or navies or a national debt to paralyze industry, exhaust the substance, or fester in the flesh of the people; they carried us safely and triumphantly through the war of 1812 and with Mexico; they added large accessions of territory to the national domain; the rights and liberties of citizens were protected and defended at home and abroad, on the land and the sea; Government securities were eagerly sought and commanded a premium in coin; the people were happy, prosperous, and contented; the public mind was securely at rest in the abiding faith that the experiment of free government had proved a success, that they had built upon a rock, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it.

These, sir, are some of the trophies scattered along the highway of our national greatness, acquired under the auspices of that party now charged with disloyalty by these newly-fledged Unionists. In behalf of my constituency and the Democracy of the country I pronounce the charge a wilful, malicious slander, and hurl the imputation back in the teeth of the calumniators with merited scorn and indignant contempt.

Having said thus much in vindication of the Democracy, suppose we carry the war into Africa and feel the strength of the enemy. And you are a Union party, are you? Pray tell us when, where, and how *you* got to be a Union party? Surely it was not in 1860, when with taunts and jeers, you sneeringly called us "Union-savers." Many of these *latter-day* Unionists are from the old Federal stock, lineal descendants from the Tories of the Revolution, enemies to the Union, the Constitution, and our form of government from the beginning. Disciples of the Adams Hamiltonian-Federal theory, they wanted a stronger, more consolidated system; they held it unsafe to confer general political powers into the hands of the people, they distrusted their capacity to govern themselves, and would have modelled our organic law more after the British form, but Madison, Jefferson, and their compeers thwarted their machinations. Since then they have been restless for a change, ever ready to coalesce with any party or faction to extirpate the Democratic theory and change the form of governernment; and although the names are legion by which this Federal scion has been known, they never before had the presumption or unblushing impudence to call themselves a "Union party."

They a Union party! No, sir; they the most wily, dangerous enemies the Union has ever encountered; their pretended devotion is only to enable them more effectually to undermine the Government and filch from the people their liberties, Judas saluted his master with a kiss that he might betray him into the hands of his enemies. It is to be hoped that our Union and Constitution may survive the deadly embrace and hypocritical kiss of these latter-day Judases, who, less scrupulous than their prototype who exacted coin as the price of innocent blood, are willing to take pay in contracts, cotton, or greenbacks.

Sir, this fungus "Union party" came into power with treason in its heart and perjury upon its lips; they took upon themselves a solemn oath to support and maintain the Federal Constitution, and at the same time held and promulgated the treasonable doctrine that our form of government had proved a failure and could not endure, although for over three-quarters of a century we had lived beneath its ægis, enjoying the blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness such as had never fallen to the lot of any other people in the world's history. How could it be expected that they would successfully administer a government which in advance they had declared a failure? Our revolutionary fathers made it to endure as long as time should last. They little thought in laying the solid foundations for future empire that it would cease to endure and crumble into fragments within the first century. It did endure, answering all the purposes of a perfect Government for over eighty years, and in our simplicity, except for the teachings and practices of this new Union party we would never have doubted its stability or endurance. Thanks to an overruling Providence, and the virtue, patriotism, and wisdom of our fathers, it has so far successfully endured the assaults of open enemies and the covert embrace of pretended friends; it has endured and outlived every danger except four years' rule of the party in power, and that is truly hard to endure; and although the aspect of our national affairs looks dark, gloomy, and portentous of evil, let us never despair of the Republic, but take courage and still hope that we may weather the storm of fanaticism and passion, and live and endure to overcome and consign to the grave of oblivion, amidst the exultant shouts of a disenthralled people, its last, most dangerous, insidious enemy.

In the present exigency of our national affairs, the practical, important question which should demand the thoughtful and dispassionate consideration of the country is how it is to be extricated from its present sad, humiliating condition; how the fell spirits of secession and abolitionism, "twin relics of barbarism" and discord, may be securely and effectually buried with the national approbation in a common grave, and "the public mind rest secure in the belief that they are in process of ultimate extinction."

Three alternatives, looking to a solution of pending difficulties, are being considered and canvassed by the people.

The first looks to a continued prosecution of the war, involving the overthrow of State institutions and governments, and the entire subjugation or extermination of the insurgents.

The second contemplates "letting the wayward sisters go in peace," division of the country and recognition of their independence, with offensive and defensive treaty stipulations and the free navigation of the Mississippi.

The third and last alternative is by means of an armistice to cease hostilities, call a national convention, with a view of amicably settling and adjusting all our differences upon the basis of the Constitution as it is and the Union as it was.

Perhaps neither of these plans are exempt from objection, but if they are the only alternatives left us we should manfully face the difficulties, calmly and dispassionately canvass them, and select the least objectionable. History and our own sad experience should admonish us that war, especially civil war, is a fearful calamity, and should be accepted only for the most imperative considerations, after all hope of honorable, peaceful adjustment had failed. I do not hold that war is never justifiable; by no means. After the exhaustion of all peaceful remedies, as the last alternative, with all its train of evils, rather than submit to national dishonor, insult, or disintegration, we should accept the arbitrament of arms.

I have no hesitation in saying, however, that in my judgment the sanguinary fratricidal conflict in which our country is now involved might by wise and prudential means on the part of those temporarily charged with the administration of public affairs have been honorably avoided; that there has been a wanton and unnecessary sacrifice of blood and treasure, and that the war should cease whenever and just as soon as peace can be secured, with a disintegrated Government, and the constitutional rights and powers of the Federal and State Governments unimpaired.

The second alternative of separation and recognition has been espoused and plausibly sustained by leading politicians and journals of both political parties; but there are to my mind serious if not insuperable objections to the proposed separation. A treaty based upon recognition and independence would, I fear, amount to nothing more enduring than a truce; that the sanguinary conflict would be renewed along our extended borders, aggravated and intensified by heart-burnings and animosities until protracted, exhausting wars would lead to foreign alliance. I hope we may never be subjected to the humiliation of being vassals and dependents to the despotisms of the Old World. Separation affords no adequate remedy for existing evils. There is not room enough on the North American continent for two independent governments. Give me rather the gilded hope of my youthful fancy, an ocean-bound Republic, with the adjacent islands shining stars in the effulgent galaxy of the national constellation, each harmoniously moving in its appropriate orbit around their common centre. Hence I conclude that the best interests of both sections and the whole country require that we should now and forever abandon all thought of despoiling our inheritance and jeopardizing our liberties by the suicidal policy of disintegration.

This brings me to the consideration of the third and last alternative, to wit, peace and a restored Union by means of mutual concessions and a fair and just compromise. This, I am frank to say, I regard with more favor than either of the preceding alternatives. It at once affords a full solution of all our differences in the spirit and upon the basis of the original compact. It has the approving sanction of precedents, and the high authority of the distinguished patriots and statesmen whose places we unworthily fill. It has the advantage of a continued and perpetuated union of the States by *consent* and not by *force*. It stops any further sacrifice of the lives of our brave men, and the accumulation of national debt. It is more in harmony with the sublime teachings of our divine Master, who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." It will place us beyond the contingency of danger

from foreign intervention or molestation. It is, sir, the true remedy, the infallible specific for the ills by which we are encompassed. It is the road our fathers trod; let us "keep step to the music of the Union," and follow in their footsteps. Perhaps the inquiry may be suggested, how are we to attain so desirable a result? I am wedded to no specific plan; if there is a will a way will readily be found. Permit me, however, to suggest that we first agree upon an armistice, then send commissioners to meet on the 4th of July at Mount Vernon, around the grave of Washington, when the soul-stirring inspiration of the day, the grandeur of the place, and the solemnity of the occasion would still and subdue every selfish ambition and unholy emotion, and rekindle a spirit of patriotism and love of country in the hearts of degenerate sons. Let the commissioners fix upon a time and place for holding a national convention to finally settle and adjust in a spirit of fairness and mutual concession all our differences; then unite and consolidate the national forces, North and South, into one grand invincible army of the Republic, and vindicate the honor and insulted dignity of the nation by reaffirming the inviolability of the Monroe doctrine, reinstating free institutions wherever foreign despots have intervened for their overthrow on this continent.

But am I asked, "Suppose all efforts to compromise fail, what do you then propose?" This is impossible; it must not, cannot be. I will not suffer myself to raise the curtain and contemplate the dim vista lying beyond all hopes of settlement. This unnatural, cruel conflict is sustained and procrastinated by passion, prejudice, and hatred. Patriotism, nationality, self-interest, civilization, humanity, and Christianity all prompt a settlement. Political fanaticism, like all other virulent contagious diseases to which frail humanity is subject, will run its course. If the patient survive, reason will be restored, it may be with a shattered and broken constitution, with heavy unliquidated liabilities, with a mere skeleton of former greatness and power; but still the patient lives.

We are now passing the crucible, the fiery ordeal of this malignat disease; the hectic flush mantles the cheek, the pulse beats quick and wiry, but there are still hopes, by a change of doctors and treatment, and careful nursing, the patient may survive. If I had power to reach the mind and touch the heart of the nation, I would beseech my countrymen everywhere, North and South, to stay their hands and cease this self-destruction before it be forever too late. Why persist in destroying the best form of government ever devised by the wisdom, virtue, and patriotism of man? Why blot out the world's last hope of free constitutional liberty? The despots of the Old World have no love for our free institutions and democratic form of government; they have marked with a jealous eye our growing greatness and power; they are pleased with the manner in which we are executing a job for them which they dare not undertake themselves. If we continue to gratify them by procrastinating our civil war until our armies are destroyed and our finances collapse, they will be ready to grasp the exhausted giant by the throat, and furnish Maximilians to rule over us. I would implore the country to pause and reflect; this question of self-preservation, of maintaining our liberties and free institutions, rises infinitely above all party considerations. Save the country though political parties crumble into atoms like a rope of sand. We must not suffer this mental aberration, this *quasi* insanity to run on till the epitaph of suicide is inscribed on the national monument.

These suggestions in favor of an amicable adjustment will not be likely to meet the approbation of the cabinets or their special adherents at Washington or Richmond. The first would peril the nation with its thirty million Anglo-Saxons for the supposed benefit of three or four million African slaves; they would extirpate slavery at whatever cost or sacrifice of blood and treasure; they would brush Federal and State coustitutions out of their way like cobwebs; they would overrun and subjugate the South and exterminate the people; they would encourage servile insurrection, and arm the slave against his master; they would make war on and starve non-combatants, women, and children; they would devastate and desolate the land with fire and sword and make it a howling wilderness; confiscate real and personal property; place the negro as to civil and political rights on an equality with the whites; execute or banish the rebel leaders; exclude all others engaged in the rebellion from the rights of citizens; place the freed negroes under the control of the Secretary of War, to be worked and managed by Government overseers; keep the people in subjection by means of a standing army, and to rule and govern the country by civil and military officers appointed by the President. Now I submit whether a war prosecuted for such purposes and in such a manner can reasonably be expected to terminate short of extermination?

On the other hand, the rebel leaders and cabinet at Richmond would prosecute the war to disintegrate the Union, subvert the Constitution, and destroy the Government, under the metaphysical sophistry that a State has the constitutional right to secede from the Union. This subtle theory cannot be sustained. It is a reproach to the wisdom and sagacity of the patriotic statesmen who moulded and fashioned our organic law to suppose a State could at will secede and destroy the whole system. Again, they say they will continue to wage this war because a party is in power pledged to overthrow the institutions of their States. Suppose it be admitted. They aided in bringing about the result, and are therefore *particeps criminis*. Let them remember the schism they caused in the Democratic party at Charleston and Baltimore, and the encouragement they gave to Johnson, Dickinson, Butler, and others of their tools and allies, to defeat the election of the Democratic nominee and thereby aid the election of the party in power; they should be quiescent at a result to which they contributed. If there is a sectional party in power hostile to their institutions they so willed it; they said they preferred Lincoln to Douglas, and got their choice; it is to be hoped they are satisfied, and will be satiated with his Administration; I think the North is already. Now, while these two war parties would continue its prosecution for entirely dissimilar purposes, they concur in saying that there is no other alternative but to fight on. It cannot be possible we are in any such extremity. If the politicians had been out of the way the people would have settled our difficulties long ago. But unfortunately for the peace of the country, the political cauldron in its effervescence had spawned to the surface a brood of political tricksters and fanatical demagogues; the scum rose to the top, and floated into positions of honor and trust; without capacity or patriotism to parry the threatened danger, they recklessly involved the country in civil war.

These wiseacres tell us that peace is a myth not

to be thought of, that we must fight on, kill and slaughter, give up the last man and the last dollar: that the country must meekly and silently submit to having our gallant young men, the flower and hope of the country, pitted against each other in deadly combat, and glory in the slaughter. The greedy Moloch of sectionalism is not satiated, though dripping with the blood fresh from the hecatomb of hundreds of thousands of human sacrifices offered upon its crimsoned altars. And still a confiding people are told there is no other way, no alternative left but to fight on, and on, and on. How long, O God! how long is this bleeding, dying people to be deceived and duped by political quacks and speculators in the suffering and life's blood of the nation? How long are the bulls and edicts emanating from Richmond and Washington to be potential to coerce the free people of this country to sacrifice their lives at their behest? In the parlance of the sportsman, they skillfully and adroitly "play into each other's hands" for the overthrow of the constitutional rights and liberties of the people; there is a most singularly marked coincidence in their views in relation to public policy. They agree that written constitutions and the solemn obligations of oaths have but little binding weight in time of war. The freedom of speech and the press has been stricken down. The people's writ of *habeas corpus* has been suspended, and its right denied to the citizen. The judicial ermine has been invaded, judges forcibly dragged from their courts and imprisoned for judicial decisions. The elective franchise has been abridged, and the voters driven from the polls at the point of the bayonet. Martial law has been declared over districts of country not in rebellion, and the military placed above the civil authorities. Free citizens, not belonging to the military or naval service, have been arrested without process, tried, and sentenced by drum-head courts-martial without counsel or jury, and exiled or incarcerated in military bastiles. These gross and flagrant infractions upon the liberties and clearly-defined constitutional rights of the people have been unblushingly perpetrated under the free institutions of the United States, in the middle of the nineteenth century, under the despotic plea of military necessity. O degenerate, subjugated sons of a glorious ancestry, whose cheek does not tinge and mantle with shame at the humiliating reflection?

Now, I submit to the House and the country whether the people had not better dispense with the services of officials who in the brief space of three years have reduced the country to its present humiliating condition. Power was temporarily placed in their hands to administer the Government, not to subvert it, or wrest from the people their liberties. They are the servants of the people to execute their will, not their masters to lord it over and oppress them; let them take due and timely notice and govern themselves accordingly. They contemplate, no doubt, by means of the purse and the sword and the vast patronage which they wield, to disregard the will of the people and perpetuate their power. If they succeed in establishing themselves in power by such means, the liberties of the country are irretrievably lost. It is time that the people were aroused to the magnitude and importance of the issues involved in the approaching contest.

For the purpose of rescuing the Government from their hands, preserving the Constitution, and maintaining the Union and the liberties of the people, let us for the time being, if need be, ignore party names and alliances, and unite with Union-loving, conservative men everywhere, to preserve and transmit as a precious boon the legacy of free government. The honest, confiding masses should not be deceived or lulled into false security; the greedy swarms of Federal officers, contractors, and placemen, who are hoarding their ill gotten wealth at the expense of the toil and sweat of the laborer, will be active and unscrupulous. I fear they have selfish, ambitious, traitorous designs upon the liberties of the country.

By rejecting all propositions looking to a peaceful adjustment they have involved the country in the most terrible, gigantic civil war the world has ever witnessed. The Douglas, Crittenden, Kellogg, and border State propositions were all rejected. The leading representative men of the South offered to accept the Crittenden compromise as a finality, if tendered in good faith by the party in power. When the peace congress was in session in this city, fearing that they might be thwarted in their cherished design of precipitating the country in civil war, they wrote and telegraphed to the Governors of the States, "Send us stiff-backed men or none;" "Ohio, Indiana, and Rhode Island are caving in, and there is some danger of Illinois;" "For God's sake come to the rescue and save the Republican party from rupture;" "Without a little blood-letting the country will not be worth a curse." Now, this shows most clearly that they were opposed to compromise, and were willing to involve the country in war to save the Republican party from "rupture."

As further evidence of their premeditated designs to have war, I submit the testimony of Judge Douglas. He said:

"The South would take my proposition if the Republicans would agree to it." "Many of the Republican leaders desire a dissolution of the Union, and urge war as a means of accomplishing disunion." "We have now reached a point where a compromise on the basis of mutual concessions or disunion and war are inevitable. I prefer a fair and just compromise."

And again, on the 2d February, 1861, he said:

"They are striving to break up the Union under the pretense of unbounded devotion to it. They are struggling to overthrow the Constitution while professing undying attachment to it, and a willingness to make any sacrifice to maintain it. They are trying to plunge the country into civil war as the surest means of destroying the Union, upon the plea of enforcing the laws and protecting the public property. If they can defeat every kind of adjustment or compromise, by which the points at issue may be satisfactorily settled, and keep up the irritation so as to induce the border States to follow the cotton States, they will feel certain of the accomplishment of their ultimate design.

"Nothing will gratify them so much or contribute so successfully to their success as the secession of Tennessee and the border States. Every State that withdraws from the Union increases the relative power of northern abolitionists to defeat a satisfactory adjustment, and to bring on a war, which, sooner or later, must end in final separation and recognition of the independence of the two contending sections."

This, Mr. Chairman, is a true and faithful exposition of the animus of the party in power, drawn by a master hand; may it give them "the power to see themselves as others see them." They refused to permit the people to be heard upon the question of compromise, for fear they would decide in favor of peace and thereby thwart their cherished

schemes of war and disunion. By reference to the Journals of the House of January 7, 1860, it will be seen that Mr. Clemens proposed to submit the Crittenden compromise to a vote of the people for adoption or rejection; (see resolutions offered by him;) this proposition they rejected by a party vote, many of the honorable members over the way, including the honorable Speaker, voting against it. This refusal to permit the people to be heard on the question of peace or war shows a premeditated intention to precipitate the country in civil war. And since they have succeeded in inaugurating their treasonable machinations against the liberties of the country nothing so rouses the irrepressible ire of these disunionists *per se* as to mention PEACE; they dread it as the devil does holy water. With swaggering, blubbering gasconade they vociferate traitor, copperhead, disloyal. This stop-thief cry of criminals lacks the merit of originality. They would divert attention and cover their tracks by charging upon others the foul and infamous treason under which their own seared and lacerated consciences are writhing. But the transparent trick, the gauzy texture will not conceal from the searching scrutiny and withering rebuke of the country the gross iniquity and dark perfidy of their crimes. The people, indignant at the imbecility and treachery of those charged with the administration of the Government, are being aroused to impending danger. The rumbling ground-swell from the disabused masses is heard in the dim distance; its audible mutterings fall like the sound of a death-knell upon the ears of the guilty plotters of treason. The "wolves in sheep's clothing" will be disrobed, and their naked deformity exposed to the indignant scrutiny of a deceived and outraged people, so that "they may be known and read of all men." Their day of reckoning is drawing near. In the midst of their public plunder, bloody carnival and bacchanalian revelings their hearts quake, knees tremble, and cheeks blanch as they read the handwriting on the wall, "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting."

Mr. Speaker, the sad, humiliating spectacle is presented to the country of its liberties being crucified and put to an ignominious death in the house of its pretended friends. They insist on giving the last dollar and the last man, but exhibit prudential caution that their dollar is the last one taken, and they the last men to go. They do not want the Southern States in the Union, consequently take care to prosecute the war in such a manner and for such purposes as to prevent their return; its continuance is their political capital stock, and they would procrastinate it as long as they can hold the offices, get fat contracts, and speculate in the blood and suffering of the country. When the war is stopped there will be two million dollars per day less tax for the people to pay; consequently, *minus* that amount to lavish among the fawning minions of power, the peculation, fraud, and plunder of the public Treasury would have to cease; the Mississippi river would be opened to navigation; the railroad monopolies could no longer extort from the farmer of the West half the value of his production for transportation to market. This war has been a godsend to monopolists, peculators, shoddy contractors, Government thieves, and public plunderers generally; they are amassing princely fortunes, rolling in wealth, revelling in their ill-gotten gains; you may set them down for the war; they "will go to the last dollar and to the last man." These Shylocks will hold mortgages in the shape of Government bonds on the property and industry of the country; a bill of sale on the sweat and toil of honest labor for unborn generations.

Mr. Speaker, it is not marvelous that New England is for the war. By means of her railroad monopolies, fishing bounties, and high tariffs she impoverishes the balance of the country, and its wealth flows into the lap of her pampered aristocracy; she, as a matter of course, favors a vigorous prosecution of the war. Did you ever know the universal Yankee nation to let up with their hands to the elbows in the pockets of the people? The history of this peculiar people furnishes no such example; they are still true to their nature and their instincts. Perhaps I should notice the oft repeated charge from the other side of the House that the Democratic party are hostile to the soldiers. No asperson could be more groundless or ungenerous. It is true they sought and advised peace rather than to have the country scourged with a devastating civil war; they would that this bitter cup might have passed, and the country not be compelled to drink it to its bitter dregs; but when their counsels were rejected and the conflict upon us there was no factious opposition interposed to the party in power trying their plan; money and men were voted without stint; Democrats vied with Republicans in filling the ranks until the first call of seventy-five thousand has swelled to over two million, a full half from the Democratic party. Such is the case in my own State, which has always been ahead of all calls. It is true there is a deficit from the Republican districts; but they have been more than filled by the excess from ours, and in case of emergency they can easily "stamp flaming giants from the earth" to fill up their quotas.

When the tocsin of war was sounded the people rallied around the flag of the country under the assurance that it was necessary to preserve the Government, and that it was to be prosecuted to enforce the laws and suppress the rebellion, and not to interfere with or overthrow the institutions or independence of the States. I am frank to say I did not rely upon these assurances, but have no fault to find with those having more faith than myself who deemed it their duty to enter the service, and cheerfully award to them the meed of patriotic self-sacrificing devotion to what they deemed the best interest of the country, and they are justly entitled to our respect, sympathy, and support; recognizing to its fullest extent this duty and obligation, I have uniformly voted supplies, increase of pay, and pensions for our soldiers. But, sir, when and in what way have the party in power exhibited their kind regard for the welfare of our soldiers? Is it in the reckless and wanton sacrifice of their lives to the Moloch of abolition? Is it in their fanatical, radical measures which have obliterated the Union sentiment of the South and united their people against us? Is it by colonizing the North with the degraded Africans from the South, so that the soldier on returning home will have to work by his side, and compete with him for place and pay? Is it by placing the *corp d'Afrique* upon an equality with them in the ranks, and thereby humiliating their pride and wounding their honor? If their love for the soldier had been anything more than hollow-hearted pretense, why did they remain in session over five months without reporting a bill to incease their pay? They knew that since our soldiers left home the expenses of living had greatly increased; that their families had to pay double the ordinary price for the necessaries of life; that labor at home was commanding from a dollar and a quarter to three dollars per day.

Why, then, should the soldier be expected to endure the hardships and dangers incident to war for less compensation than his services would command at home? These exclusive friends of the soldier have reduced his rations, and in their munificent generosity and fullness of heart have actually increased his pay ten cents per day, up, up to the prodigal sum of fifty-three and a third cents a day. This lavish increase of ten cents will enable them, if judiciously expended, to purchase from one-quarter to one-third of a yard of calico or brown domestic to clothe their families at home, and as for such luxuries as tea and coffee, they are not to be thought of; "rye coffee is good enough if the negroes can be free."

Unfortunately for this side of the House, our estimable no-party Speaker has failed, inadvertently no doubt, to assign us any such position on committees as would enable us to exercise any controlling influence for the benefit of the soldier or the country. I believe the only chairman awarded us is that on mileage, over which my distinguished colleague, [Mr. ROBINSON,] honored with six years' congressional experience, presides. But thankful for small favors in our humble sphere, at the tail end of committees, we have done the best we could. Early in the session, at my instance, a resolution was adopted directing the Military Committee to inquire into the expediency of increasing the pay of our officers and soldiers, but their attention has been so exclusively engrossed in miscegenation projects for the benefit of "American citizens of African descent," that little time was left to devote to the secondary interests of mere white soldiers. Becoming impatient after waiting several months for a report, I offered another resolution *instructing* the committee to report a bill at an early day increasing the pay of officers and soldiers at least thirty three per cent. This presented a dilemma; if it passed a bill would have to be reported; if they voted it down it would disclose to the soldiers and the country their hypocrisy. In their extremity they brought to the rescue the fertile resources and parliamentary skill of the distinguished member from Pennsylvania, [Mr. STEVENS;] in a crisis he is their reliance to furnish brains. He arose and gravely announced a desire to debate the resolution; this, under the rules, passes it over without a vote; a complacent smile passes over their anxious countenances at the success of their tactician. The honorable Speaker has never yet been able to reach the resolution. When the Military Committee introduced their bill to *reduce the rations* and increase the soldier's pay ten cents per day, I appealed to the chairman to permit an amendment to be made inserting twenty dollars in lieu of sixteen dollars per month; this he peremptorily refused, but demanded, and the House sustained, the previous question, thereby cutting off all amendments and debate. Again, when the report of the committe of conference on the military bill was under discussion, I moved to recommit the bill with instructions to report it back with an increase of pay to the soldier of at least twenty dollars per month. This proposition, at the instance of a member of the committee, [Mr. FARNSWORTH,] was ruled by the Speaker to be out of order.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, the above facts that the country may determine who are the true friends of the soldier. They may well ask to be delivered from such friends.

Honorable members over the way tell us they have been doing a nice thing for the soldiers by the bill of this session in dividing and parceling out between them and the negroes the plantations of the South, and granting them homesteads by robbing other people of the fruits of their labor and converting them to their own use. I think they have greatly mistaken and underrated the character and pluck of our citizen soldiers if they suppose they entered the service for purposes of pillage and plunder; they are not homeless freebooters to be seduced from the paths of honor by "beauty and booty;" they left homes acquired by honest industry, and domestic associations more endearing and tempting than the steal-yourself-a-home, negro-equality doctrine tendered by the party in power. Hence I conclude that these loud-mouthed professions of love for the soldier and the Union are off of the same piece, slack-twisted, badly wove, and not large enough to cover their nakedness. The patent truth is they are not for the Constitution or the Union, but, wishing to subvert them, oppose peace and urge war; they say that a little blood-letting is healthful for the body-politic; that the tree of liberty must be watered with the blood of our citizens; that there is no remission for sins but by the shedding of blood; that we must cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war; that all great nations have had civil wars, and the time has come for ours. Sir, in an evil hour these counsels prevailed. Still they hesitated to startle the country by fully showing their purposes. In ninety days, with seventy-five thousand men, the job was to be completed and the breakfast spell over. We have now reached the fourth year of the war, and they modestly ask us to extend the time that they may continue to "peg away" for four years longer. Two millions of our young men, the hope and flower of the country, have gone into the service; two hundred and fifty thousand lives have been sacrificed; as many more with shattered and broken constitutions and with maimed and mutilated persons still linger in our midst, objects of the nation's bounty and sympathy. A fearful responsibility rests upon the guilty authors of this suffering and sacrifice of life. The full measure of just punishment would be too terrible. May neither their daily meditations nor nightly visions be haunted by sepulchral spectres of departed spirits.

> "Thou canst not say, I did it: never shake
> Thy gory locks at me."

Mr. Speaker, the life of the nation is in imminent peril; the agonizing throes and death-rattle admonish us of approaching dissolution; but while there is life there is still hope. As the shipwrecked mariner seizes with dying hope to the last floating spar, so let the people rally around and cling to the Constitution as the sheet-anchor of our hope. Their duties and responsibilities are fearfully great and cannot be ignored. They owe it to their sires, the wives of their bosoms, the innocent prattlers that dandle upon their knees, to unborn generations, and to their own manhood, to preserve free government and transmit constitutional liberty as the most invaluable legacy. The Federal Constitution with all its limitations and just balances must be maintained; the reserved rights of the States and the people protected; the union of the States must be preserved and perpetuated; the personal rights and liberties of the citizen must be upheld and defended; free speech, a free press, and a free ballot, cannot be surrendered by a free people; these inalienable, clearly defined, expressly guarantied constitutional rights, invaluable to freemen, formidable only to tyrants, must be protected, maintained, and defended from any and every assault, from whatever source or under whatever pretext made, by every

lawful means, peaceably if they can, but forcibly if they must. To slavishly surrender their priceless liberties would show them to be craven-hearted cowards unworthy to enjoy them.

The State of Illinois has furnished from one hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand of her brave sons to suppress treason in front, and could, if necessary, duplicate the number, and still has left a Democratic reserve of one hundred and fifty thousand home guards of true, reliable men, who have never bowed the knee to Baal, able and willing, if it should become necessary, to protect and defend the constitutional rights and liberties of the people against any fire in the rear by home traitors.

One of the most humiliating reflections which forces itself upon the country is its barrenness of able statesmen. The national councils are filled, with but few exceptions, (which of course includes this Congress,) with men woefully dwarfed in intellect and patriotism, the scum that rises and floats to the surface during the simmering blubbering of the political cauldron.

In view of this patent deficiency there was an aptness and pertinence in the supplication recently offered up with great unction and pathos by the Chaplain of the Senate, which is said to run as follows: "O Lord, give us more brains we beseech Thee; more brains, Lord, more brains. Thou knowest our destitution and need of more brains." The President should without delay, by proclamation, make the matter of "more brains" a special subject of prayer. Surprise has been manifested in some quarters at the House selecting as their spiritual teacher a Chaplain who repudiates the evangelical Trinity and denies the divinity of our Saviour, but bear in mind we live in a progressive age. By the *new* standard of orthodoxy supplications for war and negro equality supersede the gospel of peace; the elastic consciences of the party in power are not to be hampered by the obsolete old-fogy doctrines of the old Constitution and the old Bible.

At a time like the present the utility or good taste of indulging in crimination and recrimination may be seriously questioned. It can scarcely be sanctioned in the way of retaliation, but to refrain under such provocation would have subjected the meekness of Moses to a severe test.

Now, permit me to suggest that party and personal asperities be dropped, and we apply ourselves to the higher and nobler objects of saving the country. With this purpose in view, will honorable members over the way consent for the time being, at least, to abjure the partisan and assume the stature of statesmen? It requires an effort on your part to sever party ties and breast the dashing waves of fanaticism; there is more ignoble ease in floating with the rubbish in the current, and pandering to the passion and prejudice of the hour. You have distinguished precedents for breasting the tide, by resisting popular passion and sectional fanaticism. In 1850 our argus-eyed statesmen descried in the dim distance a small dark spot, no larger than a man's hand, lowering over our political horizon, gathering in volume and blackness; they snuffed the danger in the tainted breeze. Behold Kentucky's gifted orator and distinguished statesman as he leaves again the endearments of home and enters the arena of his former glory. For four decades his clarion voice had been the talismanic wand that stirred into quicker pulsations and thrilled the national heart; crowded, spellbound Senates hung in wonder upon his words, entranced and electrified by the magic inspiration of his burning eloquence. He had retired from the stormy turmoil of political strife to enjoy coveted quiet amid the ambrosial shades of his own beloved Ashland. At the call of an imperiled country his stooping form becomes erect, his dim eye brightens. He again enters the Senate; party spirit and strife is hushed into silence. By common consent he is awarded the distinction of chairman of the conference committee of thirteen, composed in equal proportions of the distinguished men of both parties. For months they labored, vying with each other to avert the gathering storm, and sustaining their venerable chairman.

Illinois' favorite statesman, the lamented Douglas, exhibited in a remarkable degree the moral greatness and heroism to stem the tide and breast the dashing waves of fanaticism as its angry billows beat around the old ship of state, threatening to ingulf the hopes of the nation within its yawning vortex. For his action in sustaining the committee he was denounced, persecuted, and villified, but with the bitterest acrimony at his own home in Chicago; here the city council and clergy openly arrayed themselves against the measures of pacification adopted by Congress, and the popular frenzy was so great that he said he could travel through that part of the country by the light of his own burning effigies. Nor was Massachusetts' illustrious statesman exempt from the malignant obloquy of the viperous tongue for attempting to stay and roll back the flowing tide of political fanaticism engendered in the hot-house of Abolitionism in his own State; when he returned to his constituents from the Congress in which he had taken so conspicuous a part in sustaining the compromise measures of 1850, his action was so obnoxious to the vitiated sectional sentiments that he could not have been elected a justice of the peace in any township in Massachusetts; he sought to vindicate his course before his constituents, but they tried to stifle and suppress freedom of speech. The city authorities of Boston, to their shame and reproach be it spoken, refused to permit him to speak in Faneuil Hall; its doors were shut against the defender of the Constitution, the man who had done more than any other to give a name and character to New England. Oh, shame on the base ingratitude, the dark perfidy, the bitter malignity of sectional fanaticism! The great Webster never loomed up in such grand and godlike proportions; excluded from liberty's consecrated halls, the people assemble in Boston common, and there, beneath the azure arch and starry canopy of heaven, he bares his frosted locks and massive brow to the free rustling breezes; the pure water gushes from the smitten rock in terse Anglo-Saxon words, that should be written in letters of gold, appealing to the fanaticism of New England to learn to subdue their passions.

These truly great men could soar above passion and prejudice and sever the iron shackles of party. In 1852, through the national conventions of the two great political parties, the country ratified and endorsed the compromise measures of 1850 as a finality.

Mr. Chairman, may we not learn wisdom by the examples and experience of the past? I would implore honorable members to abjure party for the paramount interest of our common country, and respectfully commend to their favorable consideration these illustrious examples as eminently worthy of their noblest and most exalted aspirations. Their names and memories will live green and fresh in the hearts of the people, revered and veneratd by the friends of personal and constitutional liberty throughout the world, while the fomentors of civil war, the

bloodthirsty Marats and Robespierres, like their prototypes, will be a reproach and hissing, a by-word and stench in the nostrils of honest men.

This side of the House is powerless to give relief to our bleeding, dying country. Its destinies for weal or woe, with all its glorious memories of the past and precious hopes of the future, hang tremblingly in the balance in your hands. Will you save us our liberties, and preserve us our blood-bought inheritance? This boon we demand at your hands; we demand it in behalf of thirty million free born Anglo Saxons, whose throbbing hearts implore and wistful eyes are anxiously turned toward this capital. This you can still do. Will you do it? We do not expect you to relieve us from the burdens of the three thousand million dollars of national debt created by this war; this is not in your power. You cannot expiate for nor breathe new life into the two hundred and fifty thousand brave men wantonly sacrificed, I fear, by your war policy. You cannot restore them to their stricken and disconsolate friends, nor fill the aching void that palls these bereft and desolate hearthstones. You cannot close the gaping wounds nor ease the piercing agony of a hundred thousand brave men languishing on the field and in the hospitals. You cannot bind up the broken heart, nor stay the gushing tear of the inconsolable widow. You cannot meliorate the piteous condition, soothe the plaintive wail, nor hush the unbid sob of the moaning, heart-stricken orphan. These things you cannot do. But you can yet give us back a free, independent judiciary, the writ of *habeas corpus*, a free ballot, free speech, and a free press. Give us back the old Constitution of our fathers, with all its sacred memories and cherished associations; though torn and rent and perverted as it has been, we love it still; strong arms will uphold and warm hearts cluster and nestle around it. Give us back as it was the old Union of our fathers, without a star erased or stricken from the bright galaxy of its effulgent constellation, with the old flag of our fathers with all its ample folds still floating proudly in triumph above us.

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